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ABSTRACT

In May 1968, the Special Committee on Community Life and Structure of Maryville College recommended that an All-College Council be organized by January 1969. Following approval of this recommendation by the Executive Council of the Faculty, the Special Committee proposed the nomination of 15 council members who were subsequently chosen in a campus-wide election. The members comprised six students from the three upper classes; six faculty members from 3 groups chosen on the basis of tenure; and six administrative officers from those whose position, in the judgment of the administrative staff, would make them most useful on the Council. The President, Academic Dean, and Secretary of the Faculty would be automatic members. In January 1969, the 18-member All-College Council was installed as the chief deliberative and legislative body for Maryville College. It is responsible for long-range planning and for directing the activities of the entire college community, under the broad purposes and policies set forth by the College's Board of Directors. The three coordinating councils that supplement the Council are responsible for activities in academic, religious, social, cultural and recreational affairs. Smaller committees within the coordinating councils will direct specific programs. (WM)

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ALL-COLLEGE COUNCIL AT MARYVILLE COLLEGE

By: Dr. Carolyn L. Blair, Professor of English
and Secretary of the Faculty

The Maryville College statement of purpose, adopted in 1967, is admittedly idealistic. In its expression of concern for the pursuit of truth, it emphasizes commitment, values, and the integrity of the individual. It sets as a major goal the establishment of a vital community as the most stimulating environment for learning, describing that community as one "in which students and faculty, of varying backgrounds, abilities, talents and interests, can unite in a common purpose and freely discuss their differences, recognizing that when differences and tensions no longer exist, man ceases to grow."

Since January, 1969, with the installation of the newly-formed eighteen-member All-College Council, Maryville has taken a firm step toward proving that its statement of purpose is more than words. Six students, six faculty members, and six administrative officers and staff will hereafter constitute the chief deliberative and legislative body for the institution. They will be responsible for long-range planning and for directing the activities of the entire college community, under the broader purpose and policies set forth by the Board of Directors.

Supporting the All-College Council will be three coordinating councils responsible for activities in the major areas of campus life: (1) the academic, (2) the religious, and (3) the social, cultural and recreational. Smaller committees within each of these areas (such

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as the curriculum committee and the artist series committee) will direct specific programs. Joint student-faculty-administration membership on the coordinating councils and the committees will increase the opportunities for campuswide participation and full discussion of issues.

This new structure represents another step in a series of changes resulting from intensive self-study and redefinition of goals begun more than a decade ago as Maryville College, like other small liberal arts colleges, was challenged to justify its existence. Four years ago the Board of Directors, under the leadership of President Joseph J. Copeland, initiated the study and planning that led to the new statement of purpose and a complete revision of the curriculum. At the same time, provision was made for a reexamination of the total community structure and government. Thus, after the adoption of the new statement of purpose and the launching of the new curriculum in 1967, attention turned to this third area.

The Special Committee on Community Life and Structure, headed by President Copeland and composed of representatives from the directors, the administration, the faculty, and the student body, began an investigation of every area of campus life. Five subcommittees, with a combined membership of nearly one hundred students and faculty, assisted the Special Committee. By May, 1968, the Committee was ready to present three major recommendations to the Executive Council of

(more)

the Faculty: (1) the liberalizing of automobile regulations and regulations governing women's residence hall hours as a step toward greater student independence and responsibility; (2) the establishment of a weekly Community Issues and Values Series as a means of integrating religious, academic, and cultural experiences; and (3) the organization of an All-College Council by January, 1969, to extend decision-making to representatives of all the constituent groups.

The Executive Council approved the three recommendations. The task remaining was to work out the details for the All-College Council so that a complete plan could be submitted to the Board of Directors at the fall meeting. The Special Committee began by defining the roles of the constituent groups and establishing a philosophy of community. Recognizing the uniqueness of the college community, in which an overwhelming majority of the residents are transient, the Committee sought to devise a plan that would preserve in the representation a balance between those most directly affected by the decisions and those ultimately responsible for the health and stability of the institution. In short, the goal was to provide a common ground where the new -- the innovative -- could be tested in the light of experience, where representatives of various ages and tenure could insure the constructive kind of tension described in the statement of purpose.

The solution was the nomination of student representatives from the three upper classes, faculty representatives from three groups on the

basis of tenure, and administrative representatives from those whose position, in the judgment of the administrative staff, would make them most useful on the Council. It was decided that the president, the academic dean, and the secretary of the faculty should be automatic members. After the respective groups had made their nominations, the fifteen elected members were chosen in a campus-wide election.

Revolutionary though this new structure may seem when compared with that of most other colleges, it is simply another step in an evolutionary process that has long been at work at Maryville. Education in the classroom has gradually been supplemented over the years by student involvement in campus affairs through a student council, a student-faculty senate, and numerous joint student-faculty committees. The academics committee of the student council, for example, worked diligently with the faculty curriculum committee in the planning and implementation of the 1967 curriculum and must be given much of the credit for the smoothness with which the transition took place. It is upon this kind of foundation that Maryville is building its new community structure. The clear desire of the students to accept greater responsibility is reassuring even to the skeptics who are wary of such a sharp departure from tradition.

Pausing to take stock on the eve of its sesquicentennial, Maryville College can point to a long history of concern for community, encouragement of student involvement, and an effort to keep abreast of current trends in education. Tangible proof of the social awareness of its graduates is to be found in the large number of national

fellowship winners and its impressive record as a baccalaureate source of Ph.D.'s and M.D.'s. With a new curriculum and a new structure, it enters the next phase of its history confident not only that the small liberal arts college can prove its right to exist, but that it is in a unique position to offer direction in American higher education.